



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Forty-fifth session

Summary record of the 906th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 18 January 2010, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Gabr

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Opening of the session

1. **The Chairperson** declared open the forty-fifth session of the Committee.

Tribute to the memory of the victims of the recent earthquake in Haiti

2. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the Committee observed a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the recent earthquake in Haiti.*

Statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

3. **Ms. Pillay** (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), drawing attention to a number of developments that had taken place since the Committee's previous session in July 2009, said that a series of national and regional events had been organized throughout 2009 to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention by the General Assembly and the tenth anniversary of the adoption of its Optional Protocol. Those celebrations had culminated in a global event held on 3 December at United Nations Headquarters which she had attended along with the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the Committee.
4. On 30 September 2009, the Security Council had adopted resolution 1888 (2009) on women and peace and security, which included a request to the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative to lead, coordinate and advocate efforts to end conflict-related sexual violence against women and children, and to deploy a team of experts to situations of particular concern in order to assist Governments in preventing conflict-related sexual violence and addressing impunity.
5. In response to allegations of mass rape in Guinea following the events of 28 September 2009, the Secretary-General had appointed a commission of inquiry, whose report had been transmitted to the Government of Guinea, the Security Council, the Commission of the African Union and the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).
6. On 14 September 2009, the General Assembly had adopted resolution 63/311, in which the Assembly expressed its support for the establishment of a new entity to deal with women's rights by means of the consolidation of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). The composite entity would be tasked with promoting women's rights and well-being and gender equality.
7. At the regional level, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights had recently issued a judgement in a case filed in 2007 by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights against Mexico concerning the disappearance and murders of three of the many women who had been victims of attacks in Ciudad Juárez. The Court had found Mexico to be in violation of regional human rights conventions and had ordered it to comply with a broad set of remedial measures, including a national memorial, renewed investigations and reparations of over \$200,000 to each of the families cited in the suit.
8. With regard to the harmonization of working methods, she invited the Committee to consider the recommendations made and points of agreement identified at the tenth inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies held in November 2009. The eleventh inter-committee meeting, which was scheduled for June 2010, would focus on lists of issues and targeted reports, taking into account the application of the common core document and the treaty-specific reporting guidelines. Moreover, one of the two annual inter-committee

meetings would take the form of a working group whose first task would be to consider how to strengthen follow-up.

9. In her statement to the Human Rights Council at its twelfth session she had encouraged all relevant stakeholders to consider how the treaty body system might be streamlined and strengthened in order to enhance its coherence and effectiveness. In that connection, she wished to draw attention to an informal meeting of former and current treaty body experts that had been organized by the University of Nottingham in Dublin in November 2009 to develop a possible framework for strengthening the treaty body system. She hoped that the statement adopted at the conclusion of that meeting would find support among Committee members.

10. She trusted that the Committee would continue to strengthen its relationship with the special procedures mandate-holders, especially with the new Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Ms. Rashida Manjoo. In March 2010, the Commission on the Status of Women would undertake a 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Emphasis would be placed on the sharing of experiences and good practices with a view to overcoming remaining obstacles and meeting new challenges, including those related to the Millennium Development Goals.

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/2010/45/1)

11. **The Chairperson** drew attention to the provisional agenda contained in document CEDAW/C/2010/45/1 and said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to adopt it subject to any necessary adjustments.

12. *It was so decided.*

Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the forty-fourth and forty-fifth sessions of the Committee

13. **The Chairperson** said that Equatorial Guinea and Guinea-Bissau had ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention, bringing the total number of States parties to that instrument to 99. In addition, 55 States parties had accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, regarding the Committee's meeting time. However, that number was insufficient, given that the amendment needed to be accepted by a two-thirds majority, or a minimum of 124 States parties, before it entered into force. Achieving that goal would therefore require much more work on the part of all stakeholders.

14. She had participated in the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, where she had reiterated the Committee's interest in the reform of the United Nations gender equality architecture and had expressed her appreciation of the recent decision by the Assembly to create a new gender entity. She had indicated that the Committee would discuss ways and means of ensuring effective interaction with the new entity in order to enhance the implementation of the Convention. In addition, she had expressed gratitude for the extension of the Committee's meeting time, beginning in 2010, to three annual three-week sessions, each preceded by a one-week working group.

15. She had further informed the General Assembly that the smooth transfer of the servicing of the Committee from the Division for the Advancement of Women to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had been ensured by close cooperation between the two bodies. Lastly, she had pointed out to the Assembly that the Committee had taken full advantage of the opportunities provided by the transfer to interact with the High Commissioner and other senior staff, welcomed opportunities to discuss issues of mutual concern with special rapporteurs and independent experts of the Human Rights Council, and had forged close relationships with other treaty bodies.

16. From 30 November to 2 December, she had attended the tenth inter-committee meeting, which had recommended the establishment of a working group on follow-up to be composed of the members of each treaty body who were responsible for follow-up activities. That was an extremely important endeavour that deserved the Committee's full attention. The tenth inter-committee meeting had also recommended that the working group on follow-up should be divided into two sub-groups, one on follow-up to concluding observations and one on follow-up to individual communications; that other thematic working groups should be established; and that the follow-up procedure of each treaty body should be considered as a transparent public procedure. Those recommendations were timely in that they coincided with the Committee's plans to adopt procedures for assessing follow-up reports at the current session.

17. On 3 December 2009, she had attended the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention at United Nations Headquarters, where she had stressed the competence, dedication and imagination consistently shown by Committee members and the broad recognition of the Committee as the legitimate and internationally respected voice for the human rights of women and girls. Lastly, she had underscored the fact that the Committee regarded the Convention as a living instrument that should remain relevant to the emerging concerns of women in all parts of the world.

18. Despite the progress made, greater efforts on the part of all stakeholders were needed to strengthen implementation if tangible results in the lives of individual women were to be achieved. The Committee should seize the 15-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as an opportunity for sharing experiences and good practices. In addition, OHCHR should endeavour to increase its support for the Committee by allocating additional human and financial resources and providing technical assistance to States parties that requested it.

19. During the current session, the Committee's agenda would include the consideration of eighth State party reports, communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention, a draft general recommendation on older women and a methodology under its follow-up procedure. The Committee would also meet with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), representatives of national human rights institutions and United Nations institutions, all of which made valuable contributions to the Committee's work.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

20. **Ms. Coker-Appiah**, speaking as Chairperson of the pre-session working group for the forty-fifth session, said that the working group had prepared lists of issues and questions relating to the periodic reports of Egypt, Malawi, the Netherlands, Panama and Uzbekistan, the initial report of the United Arab Emirates and the combined initial, second and third periodic report of Botswana. The working group had prepared the list of issues and questions relating to the report of Ukraine between sessions, since a translated version of the report had not been available for consideration by the working group at its pre-session meeting.

Implementation of articles 21 and 22 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

21. **Ms. Lucke** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that the working group had continued to work on the draft general recommendation on older women and the protection of their human rights, and that a revised draft prepared by the Chairperson of the working group had been distributed to members.

22. The Committee had before it a note by the Secretary-General on reports of specialized agencies on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities (CEDAW/C/2010/45/3) and on the report of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which has been issued as an addendum to that note (CEDAW/C/2010/45/3/Add.4). The Committee had received information from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), which were reconsidering the content of their reports in order to make them more useful to the Committee.

Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee

23. **Ms. Lucke** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that the note by the secretariat on ways and means of enhancing the work of the Committee (CEDAW/C/2010/45/4) contained information provided by the secretariat, comments made by Committee members and information pertaining to developments in the human rights regime, including the human rights treaty bodies, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, as well as information on the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention. The report also provided information on reports of States parties to be considered at future sessions.

24. Annexes to the note identified States that had not ratified or acceded to the Convention and States parties whose reports had been submitted at the time the report had been prepared but had not yet been considered or scheduled for consideration by the Committee. Since the compilation of the note, reports from Italy and Zambia had been received.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.